

What is claimed is:

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A: 1. A method for use in managing a call queue within a call center, said call queue for handling calls having a plurality of different call types that each have a corresponding service objective value, comprising the steps of:

5 receiving a new call from an exterior environment, said new call having a first call type;

ascertaining a service objective value associated with said new call based on said first call type; and

10 determining a position within the call queue for said new call based on said service objective value associated with said new call and a length of time that other calls have been in the call queue.

2. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of determining a position includes determining said position based on service objective values associated with said other calls.

3. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of determining a position includes calculating, for a first call in a first queue position in said call queue, a

ratio R_{cc} between an estimated total time in queue for the first
5 call if the first call remains in the first queue position and a
service objective value associated with said first call.

4. The method claimed in claim 3, wherein:

said step of determining a position includes determining a
ratio R_{nc} between an estimated total time in queue for the new
call in the first queue position and the service objective value
5 associated with the new call.

5. The method claimed in claim 4, wherein:

said step of determining a position includes determining a
ratio R_{cs} between an estimated total time in queue for the first
call in a subsequent queue position within said call queue and
5 the service objective value associated with the first call,
wherein said subsequent queue position is a next queue position
to said first queue position within said call queue.

6. The method claimed in claim 5, wherein:

said step of determining a position includes determining a
ratio R_{ns} between an estimated total time in queue for the new
call in the subsequent queue position and the service objective

5 value associated with the new call.

7. The method claimed in claim 6, wherein:

said step of determining a position includes determining whether said new call should be placed in said first queue position within said call queue based on values for R_{CC} , R_{NC} , R_{CS} ,
5 and R_{NS} .

8. The method claimed in claim 6, wherein:

said step of determining a position includes ascertaining that said new call is to be placed in said first queue position when $|R_{NC} - R_{CS}| < |R_{NS} - R_{CC}|$.

9. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said plurality of different call types includes a plurality of vector directory numbers (VDNs) associated with incoming calls.

10. A system for managing a call queue within a call center, said call queue for handling calls having a plurality of different call types that each have a corresponding service objective value, said system comprising:

5 means for tracking an amount of time that each call within the call queue has been waiting in the call queue;

means for receiving a new call from an exterior environment; and

means for determining a position within the call queue for
10 the new call based on a service objective value associated with the new call and the amount of time that other calls within the call queue have been waiting.

11. The system claimed in claim 10, wherein:

said call queue includes a first queue position and said means for determining a position includes means for ascertaining whether said new call should replace a current call presently
5 within said first queue position.

12. The system claimed in claim 11, wherein:

said means for ascertaining includes means for generating a first quality value corresponding to said current call being within said first queue position and a second quality value
5 corresponding to said new call being within said first queue position, wherein said first quality value is generated based on an amount of time that said current call has been waiting within

the call queue.

13. The system claimed in claim 12, wherein:

said means for ascertaining includes means for comparing
said first quality value and said second quality value to
ascertain whether said new call should replace said current call
5 within said first queue position.

14. The system claimed in claim 13, wherein:

said first quality value and said second quality value are
each calculated using a ratio between a total expected wait time
for a corresponding call and a service objective value
5 associated with the corresponding call.

15. The system claimed in claim 12, wherein:

said means for ascertaining determines that said new call
should replace said current call within said first queue
position when said second quality value is less than said first
5 quality value.

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16. A system for use in distributing incoming calls to a
plurality of local agents in a call center, said system

5 comprising:

a receiver for receiving incoming calls from an exterior environment;

a call queue unit for use in maintaining a queue of calls to be answered by the plurality of local agents, said queue having a plurality of successive queue positions including an initial queue position, said initial queue position for holding a call that is next in line to be answered by an agent in the plurality of local agents; and

a call positioning unit for positioning a new call received by said receiver within the queue, said call positioning unit determining a position within the queue for the new call based on a length of time that calls within the queue have been waiting to be answered.

17. The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said call positioning unit determines said position for said new call based on a service objective value associated with said new call.

18. The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said call positioning unit determines said position for

said new call based on service objective values associated with calls already within the queue.

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19. The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said call positioning unit includes a comparison unit for comparing a quality value associated with said new call to a quality value associated with a current call within a first queue position to determine whether said new call should replace said current call within said first queue position.

20. The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said call positioning unit includes an analysis unit for analyzing individual queue positions within said queue, starting with said initial queue position, until a queue position is found that meets a predetermined condition indicating that said new call should replace an existing call within said queue position.